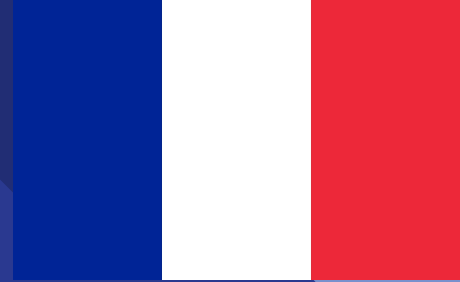




# Special Education in France and The United States of America: A comparison and contrast



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# *Abstract*

Special Education for young children has been changing for years. These changes have included more progressive education in a global sense, that involves a focus on the child over a focus on their disability. These progressive changes have not only changed Special Education in The United States but also in western Europe. During a study abroad experience in Angers, France in the summer of 2019, research was conducted on how the Special Education System in The United States differs from the Special Education System in France. The goal of this project is to educate university peers, staff and officials about progressive education in a global sense and its importance. This project focuses on the similarities and differences between the two systems. Through the use of interviews of relevant individuals, based on their experiences and expertise, as well as personal experiences and research while studying abroad, it has been discovered that more progressive instructional practices have been implemented in The United States.

# *Motivation*

- Major in Early Intervention and French
- Studied abroad in France during summer of 2019 (stayed in Versailles, Paris, and Angers)
- Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (later becomes Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2004 in the US) versus “Loi numero 2005-102” of 2005
- Access to interventions for children
- ~78,000 children and growing with diagnosis in France (European Agency 2014 report)
- 2017–18: students ages 3–21 who received special education services under IDEA was 7.0 million, or 14 percent of all public school students; 34 percent had specific learning disabilities. (National Center for Education Statistics)



# *Problem Statement*

- Visited 3 elementary schools to inquire about special education in France
- Visited 3 elementary schools to inquire about special education in The United States (student teaching and job experiences)
- Interviewed many French and American experts
- Took observation notes while studying abroad about schools and setting for children with disabilities

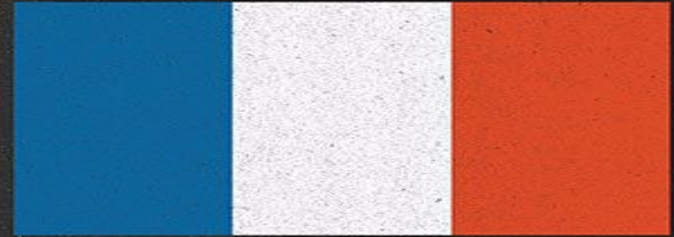
*Pictures of sidewalks and roads in France (limited access for wheelchairs and walkers—different in The US due to ADA)*



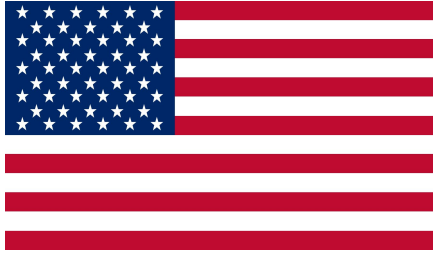


# *Research Objective*

- Determine the similarities and differences between France's Special Education System and that of The United States of America



# *Similarities of Special Education Systems*

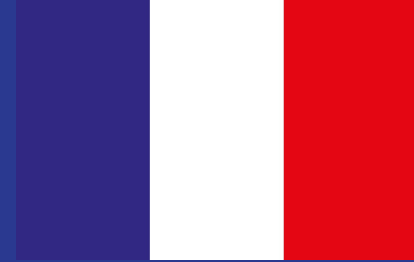


- Similar basic age groups/ranges for Early Childhood Education
- IDEA and ADA
- Evaluation Team Report (ETR) and Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Approaches to inclusive education for students with special needs



- Similar basic age groups/ranges for Early Childhood Education
- Loi numero 2005-102
- Screening done by Maison Départementale des personnes handicapées (MDPH); determination of services done by Commission des droits et de l'autonomie des personnes handicapées (CDAPH)
- Personalised programme is created for the child-Projet personnalisé de scolarisation (PPS)
- SESSAD (services d'éducation spéciale et de soins à domicile) assist children with mental, motor and sensory disabilities ensuring early education and support for the family (counselling and accompagnement to treatments)

# Differences between Special Education Systems



- Inclusive Educational Practices
- IEP
- 7 million students (as of 2018) receiving special education services under IDEA
- Specific Learning Disability-most served disability
- Progressive
- 13 categories of disabilities covered under IDEA
- Prepared teachers due to growing rate of students with disabilities
- Accessible buildings to children with disabilities

- Less inclusive practices (more focus on “pull out” for students with severe disabilities to different schools (Établissements Régionaux d'Enseignement Adapté - EREA)
- PPS (covers Autism, developmental delays, intellectual disabilities, blindness, deafness, neurological disabilities, emotional disabilities, communication disabilities, physical disabilities, specific learning disabilities and health issues
- CLIS (*classes d'intégration scolaire*) is for children with disabilities too severe for schooling in regular classes, but not requiring special facilities-Disabilities divided into 4 categories (cognitive learning disorder; hearing impairments; visual impairments; physical disabilities)
- Reference teachers-child has a teacher that follows their educational experience



# *Quotes*

“If we are to create truly inclusive schools, we must radically change mindsets and reform our education system. We have a duty to address our pupils' needs, along with those of their families, as quickly as we can. We want French schools to be fully inclusive, because we believe that is the best way to raise standards”

-Jean Michel Blanquer, Minister of National Education and Youth (France)



# *Citations*

- <https://www.angloinfo.com/how-to/france/family/schooling-education/special-needs-education>
- <https://www.education.gouv.fr/international-perspectives-inclusive-education-9734>
- <https://www.french-property.com/guides/france/public-services/school-education/special>
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